



Michigan Business Aviation Association

**Testimony of
Roger Salo,
Chair of the Michigan Business Aviation Association**

**Before the
House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee
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Chairman Schmidt and other members of this honorable committee, my name is Roger Salo, and I am the Chair of the Michigan Business Aviation Association (MBAA). I am grateful for the opportunity to appear before you today and appreciate you holding this important hearing on aviation funding.

We appreciate your work to improve Michigan's transportation system, which contributes to economic growth and job creation. In these challenging economic times, the importance of a robust transportation system cannot be overemphasized.

To give you a little background on us, MBAA was founded 15 years ago with the purpose of furthering efforts to maintain and improve airport infrastructure throughout Michigan. One of our goals is to find a permanent funding source for Michigan's airport infrastructure that will ensure Michigan continues to offer first-rate air transportation services to residents and job providers.

We represent business and general aviation airplane owners and operators, businesses, suppliers, aircraft repair stations, charter companies, manufacturers, universities and much more throughout the State of Michigan. Our members have one thing in common: they depend on general aviation aircraft to help them meet some of their most difficult transportation challenges.

You might ask, what is Business Aviation?

Business Aviation is the use of any general aviation aircraft - piston or turbine - for a business purpose. Business aviation is the fastest growing segment of the general aviation industry and comprises 85 percent of general aviation activity. Remember, here in Michigan we are surrounded by water so business aviation takes on an even more critical role in our economy.

Most people understand that aviation provides jobs for pilots, mechanics, air traffic controllers and people involved in the manufacturing and maintenance of airplanes. However, aviation also creates good jobs in insurance, financing, advertising, catering, law consulting and many others. These jobs are directly tied to aviation too.

I would like to close with this, One mile of road takes you one mile; one mile of runway takes you to the world!

Rapid, virtually instantaneous, high-speed internet access and electronic communication has become a fundamental aspect of life in the 21st century. Just as life without high-speed communication would be hard to imagine, it would be equally difficult to envision modern life without air transportation.

On behalf of MBA, we encourage you to include aviation in any transportation package you consider. Airports are not only important to air travelers; they provide significant economic and quality-of-life benefits to the communities in which they are located.

For example, operations like WINGS OF MERCY and Corporate Angel Network, exemplify this commitment. Corporate Angel Network helps people with catastrophic illnesses and costly medical bills reach treatment centers for their particular type of cancer at no cost. MBA member, Dow Chemical Company, has partnered with Corporate Angel Network for nearly thirty years, flying more than 6,000 flights helping people.

People in business aviation are dedicated to helping provide lifesaving flights to the communities in which they live and work.

General aviation responds to emergencies when there's a need to confront floods in the Midwest, fires in the West, and a whole host of other natural disasters.

- Michigan ranks 5th nationwide in the number of registered business aircraft.
- Aviation contributes more than \$19 billion annually to Michigan's economy. 1 million = about 2 billion annually in economic activity.
- Michigan has 17,500 pilots, 70 flight schools and 7,000 general aviation aircraft.
- Aviation serves as a lifeline for communities with declining airline service.
- There are more than 235 public use airports in Michigan. Businesses companies, employing one million people, operate their own aircraft.
- Business Aviation means good jobs. More than 1,000 Michigan companies are the only industry that exports more than it imports

Why is Business Aviation Essential to our Economy and Transportation Systems?